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ABSTRACT

The idea for a program which would enable interested and capable inner-city residents to enter a performance-oriented teacher preparation program culminating in an undergraduate degree and teacher certification was suggested and developed by representatives of two privately operated community schools in the Roxbury section of Boston, the New School for Children and the Roxbury Community School, and Northeastern University. During a 6-month trial implementation period, intern teachers taught in their respective schools three days a week, and University faculty, school principals, and interns met 2 days each week for planning and instructional seminars. In these seminars portions of undergraduate and elementary school curriculum components were devised and incorporated into an evolving program. Many problems in interpersonal relations were encountered during this period, and the program eventually lost its funding in June 1970. (RT)

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THE DIRECTOR'S FINAL REPORT

ON

"A PROTOTYPE PROGRAM FOR TEACHER EDUCATION"

OEG-0-9-319205-3615 (725)

(Jointly planned by the Roxbury Community School,
The New School for Children, and
Northeastern University).

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SYNOPSIS

The Prototype Teacher Education Program was designed to enable interested and capable inner-city residents to enter a performance-oriented teacher preparation program culminating with an undergraduate degree and teacher certification. The Prototype curriculum, if fully developed, would have provided an economically deprived segment of society with a tangible means for revitalizing their children's formal education by being participants in its formulation and execution.

The idea for this unique method of preparing teachers was suggested and developed by representatives of two privately operated community schools in the Roxbury section of Boston, the New School for Children and the Roxbury Community School, and Northeastern University during the Winter and Spring of 1969. In June of 1969, a $125,000 planning and operational grant was given to the three participating groups by the U.S. Office of Education to implement the Program for a six-month period.

During its extended year-long operation, the Prototype Program participants overcame many obstacles, and in face of these difficulties had made remarkable progress in meeting their stated objectives. The success of this program had resulted largely from the genuinely cooperative manner in which Project ideas and procedures had been developed and implemented, and the excellent personal relationships having emerged among the participants.

The Program participants consisted of seven members of the Northeastern University faculty, the two community school principals, and six intern teachers from each school. Procedurely, interns taught in their respective schools three days each week, and University faculty, school principals, and interns met in variable arrangements on two days each week for planning and instructional seminars. In these seminars, portions of undergraduate and elementary school curriculum components were devised and then incorporated into an evolving program of classroom application. Eventually, a general prototype model would have resulted from this effort, specifying in detail the broad educational experiences interns would have received in order to teach effectively in inner-city schools. The model presented in subsequent pages was developed, primarily, according to the interns' own specifications, with school principals serving as resource people and college faculty functioning as

guiding agents and participant learners.

If financial support had continued, the program would not only have identified people from the inner-city for initial entry work in teaching children in urban schools, it would have taken them through a comprehensive teacher preparation program culminating in a baccalaureate degree and teacher certification.

This program, if ever completed, should serve as a prototype for changing the structure and the nature of undergraduate and graduate teacher training for inner-city schools.

THE PROTOTYPE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

I. Introduction

The following pages will briefly explain the structural nature of a unique program for preparing teachers to work in urban ghetto schools, and outline the actual progress made in attempting to translate the conceptual model into practice. The development and implementation of the Prototype Teacher Education Program was the cooperative undertaking of two privately operated inner-city elementary schools in the Roxbury section of Boston--the Roxbury Community School and the New School for Children--and Northeastern University.

II. Program Assumptions and Unique Structural Features

The impetus for developing the Prototype Program had emerged from a single belief: that traditional teacher education programs have been seriously deficient in preparing teachers to work in ghetto schools. The inefficacy of conventional programs suggested the following theoretical propositions upon which the Roxbury-Northeastern program had been predicated; the latter also implicitly designate the operational rationale of the Prototype Program.

First, as a result of the continued exclusion of inner-city residents from significant roles in programs designed to "help" them, the

Roxbury-Northeastern Project had as its basic structural feature that ghetto residents be integrally involved in all aspects of planning and implementing the venture. Thus follows the tangible provision that each of the three participating groups has an equal voice in all important decision-making procedures. Implicit in this first structural proposition are several crucial assumptions: that inner-city residents have the most concrete awareness of the problems and needs of their community. Therefore, if given an actual opportunity to solve indigenous educational problems, they will have the motivation and ability to do so. A specific ultimate consequence of this is that if the ghetto residents, a representative sample of which constituted a portion of the teaching staff at the Roxbury Community and the New School and were additionally the intern teacher trainees in the Prototype Program, are given a reasonable opportunity to enter the field of education as qualified certificated teachers with an undergraduate degree, they will have an important influence in improving the quality and relevance of education in their inner-city schools.

The second proposition determining the structure of the Prototype Program, designed to ameliorate the problems of irrelevance of traditional teacher preparation programs for inner-city school environments, is that the interns will formulate the specifications of a relevant teacher education program for ghetto schools and subsequently work cooperatively with University faculty to develop a detailed undergraduate curriculum for fulfilling their proposal. Practically speaking, this meant that Project

interns would develop with the advisment of University faculty, throughout the duration of their undergraduate education, those learning experiences they perceive as most pertinent for their preparation as effective teachers in urban schools. This would result in interns largely designating and subsequently participating in an undergraduate curriculum of their own specification, and further as an additional, integral component of their undergraduate experience that they develop curricula meaningful and appropriate for children in inner-city schools.

The third proposition of the Prototype Teacher Preparation Program was designed to improve the present limited causal relationship between academic training and subsequent professional performance in actual applied field setting. The criticism of traditional teacher education irrelevance for a variety of actual school environments implies that present college courses do little to provide undergraduate education majors with necessary information and classroom teaching skills needed to function effectively as full-time teachers. Thus, the third program proposition stipulates that undergraduate curriculum content will be revised and that the quality of interns' elementary school classroom behavioral performance, not exclusively their ability to succeed in traditional college curricula, serve as the principal basis for evaluating their work as undergraduates. In concrete terms, this meant that interns and University faculty would jointly specify the behavioral skills and characteristics of effective urban school teachers, and interns would be given college credit according to the extent to which they demonstrate a facility in exercising

the specified skills and applying allied knowledge.

Theoretically stated, these were the Program structural considerations logically and empirically suggested in the past, intended to "help" the underprivileged. More important, these propositions were clearly the consequents of merely attempting to honestly comply with the wishes of those inner-city residents who offer proposals for correcting the ills of their community. However, it was one thing to conceptualize a program, even one predicated upon insightful premises, and yet another matter to validly translate the model into practice. The Prototype Teacher Education Program became a classic embodiment of this challenging problem. It is this latter issue that we must now consider, at least on the basis of the relatively small amount of time during which the program had been fully operational.

III. The Complexity of Assessing Program Progress

Implicit in the notion of progress is the necessity for measuring change of state over time according to explicitly stated baseline data and valuational criteria. Determinations of progress are typically most successful when executed in quantitative terms. This neat proposal for assessing progress is enormously complicated when human beings are introduced to situations subject to evaluation. Assessing progress in an endeavor where success is heavily contingent upon the compatability of human relationships requires that judgments not be merely quantitative but also qualitative. However, the difficulty in formulating these judgments can be understood by considering a few characteristic facts about

the Prototype Teacher Education Program. At a macroscopic level there are marked differences in the historical backgrounds of the three groups of project participants: that is, particularly in terms of race, educational achievement, vocational development, social class status and life style. There are, however, more subtle factors dramatically complicating the problem of determining the extent of progress in meeting program objectives, particularly as the latter are implicitly contained in the second and third propositions upon which the Prototype Program has been conceptualized. Some of the more significant contextual factors were the following:

a. In contrast to the vast majority of conventional social reform programs where established, essentially white, middle-class institutions have had the power to control program design and directionality and thereby essentially the behavior of subordinate participants (particularly those for whom the programs were designed to "help") in order to achieve and perpetuate conventional institutional objectives, Northeastern University was at a serious disadvantage if its role was contemplated as possessing and exercising institutional power. In saying this, reference is not merely being made to Northeastern's one-third voice in decision-making; more fundamentally the situation was to be understood by considering the unique history of the Roxbury community schools, and the favored position it afforded Project interns. The interns were not unorganized, spiritless poor people acquiescing to the will of extrinsic institutional policy. On the contrary, both schools had been conceived and

operated principally by ghetto residents who in face of overwhelming odds against success met yearly budgets in excess of one-quarter million dollars! Beyond this, many of the short-comings of public education in the ghetto were available to the children educated in the privately operated community schools; i.e., children were learning to experience themselves as successful and worthwhile individuals, not failures; parents regarded the community schools as their own schools where they could visit at will, observe their children in classrooms, and meet with teachers without fear of professional condescension; and particularly in the Roxbury Community School where the teachers were nearly exclusively inner-city residents, the extent of faculty cohesion and educational commitment to children was extraordinary. Obviously, this was not to say that the schools were without problems. Rather, the basic fact to be understood was that poor people were surmounting enormous practical educational problems. They had established schools pertinent to the needs of their children, and in the process had in many key instances come to experience and recognize their potency as effective and capable human beings. This had been accomplished in spite of the numerous negative judgments of society's established institutions. It was precisely in this form of self-actualization that the hope of the underprivileged resided. As the matter pertained to the Prototype Teacher Education Program, the fact that most interns experienced themselves as worthwhile, honest, and capable human beings rendered Northeastern University participants functionally ineffectual to the extent that they did not concretely understand

this profound achievement. In short, if a "more knowing," "less knowing" relationship occurred in daily relationships, then the program will surely fail. To the extent, conversely, that Northeastern staff members came to individually experience themselves as worthwhile, honest, and capable individuals, and to the degree that this awareness was commonly acknowledged by all project participants, the Roxbury-Northeastern education venture would achieve commensurate success as defined by program objectives. This manner of protraying important contingencies for progressive movement may impress the reader as indeed unorthodox, particularly if one uses as a basis for understanding human behavior contemporary mechanistic psychological theories and assumptions about man. However, it promotes a better comprehension of the complex problem at hand and accentuates the difficulties arising when program evaluation is considered in qualitative as well as quantitative terms.

Therefore, it is clear that Project interns had an established tradition of successful working relations in their schools, achieved independently from the paternal assistance of white, middle-class institutions. This fact effectively relegated the Northeastern staff to a "Johnny come lately" status, placing the latter in the defensive position of having to establish their credibility in the eyes of the "inner-city establishment" before meaningful and productive interaction could transpire among participating groups.

b. Another fundamental fact complicating attempts at making clear-cut determinations about Project progress was that the

Northeastern faculty participants, designated theoretically to function in a cooperative advisory capacity in assisting interns with designing undergraduate and elementary school curricula, had, by enlarge, little experience and knowledge pertaining to inner-city affairs. Resultantly, the problem of three groups of individuals coming from importantly different "worlds" working cooperatively and constructively with one another presented itself ominously to the prospect of program success. Thus several groups of people essentially ignorant and frequently suspicious of one anothers way of life were entering into a cooperative educational planning and working relationship, and at least institutionally speaking, the "less-knowing" group was being asked to propose tangible directionality for the "more-knowing" group in an environment about which the latter was largely unfamiliar. To compound the complexity of this cooperative endeavor, both groups, if the full extent of the challenge was appreciated, would be contending with problems taxing the imagination and resources of behavioral scientists throughout this century and which in an applied sense had remained essentially unresolved. Thus, the Prototype Program if one was to carefully ponder its stated objectives was an enormously ambitious undertaking.

One additionally complicating fact must be mentioned. It was that the Northeastern faculty participating in the Project, who in the normal context of their University teaching worked largely independent from one another, were unorganized as an intellectually functioning unit, relative to the great demands imposed by the Prototype Program. Thus any

notion of Project progress had to make provision for assessing the degree of University faculty cohesiveness achieved in executing its cooperative function.

IV. Criteria for Assessing Program Progress

The reader can now appreciate some of the more subtle but powerfully significant factors that must be considered in making valid statements about the progress of the Prototype Teacher Education Program. Elucidating the causal importance of these factors is at a more general level of application suggesting the rudiments of an evaluative framework for making qualitative as well as quantitative judgments about the extent of progress made in any complex interpersonal problem-solving endeavor. What, then, were the particular criteria upon which the Prototype Program could be appropriately evaluated? Which criteria would demand the valid assessment of fundamental causal variables related to Program success, as opposed to diverting attention to more peripheral, perhaps easily quantifiable factors? Stated differently, which criteria would evaluate the fundamental progress made in the extraordinary circumstance where, as it has been said, representatives of a relatively powerful, well-established, white, confident, middle-class institution entered into a genuine power-sharing partnership with two other non-institutionalized groups who possessed few attributes characteristic of the former? The following general criteria, it seems, validly assess some of the basic process variables integral to the Prototype Program's success during its brief duration:

Criterion 1. The quality of human relationships developed over

time among all Project participants. More explicitly, the extent to which cognitive and affective content relevant to Project proceedings is (a) openly discussed and (b) reconciled among Project participants.

Criterion 2. The degree of actual institutional responsiveness in meeting its stated objectives. This can be measured by the extent to which an institution diverts its available resources (e.g., physical plant, funds, staff, program flexibility, willingness to innovate, willingness to undergo reasonable risk to attain objectives, etc.) for achieving stated Program objectives.

Criterion 3. The degree of non-institutional responsiveness in meeting stated objectives, as measured by the extent to which the non-institutional groups divert their available resources for attaining specified ends.

Criterion 4. Also implicit within criteria two and three are the sub-criteria suggested by the three propositions depicting the Prototype Program design.

Next, the major instances where the planning-operational phase of the Prototype Teacher Education Program can be evaluated according to the above criteria will simply be enumerated, i.e., roughly from January 1969 through June 1970.

V. Evaluation of Program Progress

Criteria One and Three

1. In January 1969, representatives of the Roxbury Community School and the New School for Children approached the Associate Dean

of the Northeastern University College of Education, Ray C. Dethy, to explore the possibility of having uncertificated teachers working in the community schools attend Northeastern University to obtain an undergraduate degree in elementary education. Dethy's reply was that there was no such part-time program available at Northeastern, and further, he would be uninterested in the proposed arrangement because the College of Education had little formal expertise to offer prospective inner-city teachers. However, Dethy proposed an alternative arrangement; that Northeastern would be interested in making an undergraduate program available if the community school principals and uncertificated teachers served as integral participant planners with School of Education faculty in developing a prototype urban education program. In this way the community schools could potentially have their objective satisfied, and Northeastern's College of Education would have a means for revitalizing its teacher-education programs as well as developing a new presumably relevant urban education curriculum by having its full-time undergraduate and graduate instruction staff actively involved in the joint planning venture. The community school representatives found Dethy's proposal provocative, and returned to their schools to present this plan to their boards of directors for approval. The boards found the proposal acceptable, and meetings were arranged where prospective program participants from the community schools could meet with Ray Dethy and his assistant, Terry Cassidy, to plan and initiate a funding strategy. These meetings continued through the spring of 1969, culminating in June with a "Special

Projects" grant from the U.S. Office of Education for sustaining the Prototype Program development during the ensuing six months.

The good will and trust achieved among most of the participants during these early planning meetings was substantial, proving to be a major unifying force in the Program. Essentially, the conditions specified in criterion one, above, were steadily promoted. These positive conditions developed primarily because of the shared decision-making provision and the humane, capable and committed individuals participating in the cooperative endeavor.

During these planning meetings both community school participants, Dethy, and Cassidy made great personal contributions in terms of time, commitment, and enthusiasm.

2. In June 1969, it was made known to Project participants that Dean Dethy would be leaving Northeastern to assume a deanship at another university. From this, it was clear that a major vitalizing force would be lost to the Prototype Program, the least of the reasons being that he was unquestionably the principal source of support for the Program at Northeastern. William Quill, in the Counselor Education Department at Northeastern, was appointed Program Coordinator at Dethy's request.

Quill's entry into the program was a complicated matter for some of the following reasons. Previously during the winter and spring of 1969, sound friendships emerged among the community school participants, Dethy, and Cassidy. This positive configuration of relationships was

subjected to substantial strain with the entrance of a new coordinator. Quill essentially did not know the myriad of subtle historical facts that had become the intimate knowledge shared by program participants. Thus, he was confronted with the task of establishing credibility in the eyes of program participants. In essence, he was the first new member introduced to an established family of relationships. Quill gradually achieved credibility during July and August, but the process was constantly hampered by the sporadic, infrequent occasions for group meetings in the summer due to the diverse involvement of interns in a variety of personal and community activities during these months. The major accomplishment made by Quill in the summer was transcending the "information gap" which persisted in being a source of constant perplexity.

Another difficulty confronting the Prototype Program during the summer of 1969 was the additional stress on human relationships resulting from the resignation of the New School principal. This lack of leadership at the New School placed its interns in an uncoordinated and thereby an insecure position, for they did not know whether the principal to be hired would be supportive of their Program involvement or generally the whole Prototype Program concept. The appointment of a new principal was not made until the latter part of August.

Program stability was further jeopardized during the summer of 1969 by a growing uneasiness in the interns resulting from not having a clear, concrete notion of their day-by-day participation in developing the Prototype Program when it was to get fully underway in September

1969. Heretofore nearly all the energy of participants had been devoted to preparing a proposal for obtaining a Federal operational grant. Little discussion had transpired about actually translating Project objectives as stated in the funded proposal into specific action. Further, interns were extremely anxious about the entrance and involvement of Northeastern faculty in the Program, for their involvement had been nearly exclusively with Dethy and Cassidy, and to a far lesser extent with Quill.

Therefore, the summer of 1969 was a very trying period for all Program participants. Gradually, the instability had been reconciled. Methodologically speaking, it seems to have been overcome through the promotion of the conditions specified in criterion one, above.

3. In late August, a new principal was appointed at the New School, and resultantly, Northeastern University was again in a position of having to establish its credibility to this individual and the School's board of directors to whom he was responsible.

After having met with the principal and several board members, it was clear that the controlling agents at the New School were very suspicious of Northeastern's involvement in the Prototype Program, perceiving the latter as a typically exploitive, large, white institution. This attitude, persisting throughout the fall of 1969, had impaired the progress of the Prototype Program, for the New School interns were left with the uneasy feeling of not having firm assurance that the principal and school board were importantly committed to the Program's success. There was, nevertheless, a persistent effort by the Roxbury Community School and

Northeastern, as well as by most New School interns themselves, to nurture good mutual working relations, and the point had been achieved during March 1970 where nearly all program participants had coped with the issue of the New School's commitment, to the extent of attending seriously to Project objectives.

4. In September of 1969, the stability of relationships achieved during the summer was again disrupted when the College of Education faculty was incorporated into the Prototype Program, according to formal specification. Consequently, the complicated interpersonal conditions cited in criterion one had to be re-established among Project members. The experience was difficult for interns because much of the process entailed retracing previously covered ground as well as surmounting status problems inherent when "more-knowing" and "less-knowing" individuals come into contact. The resolution of these basic interpersonal problems, however, was preconditional to meeting the subsequent challenging Project proposal provisions that these initially disparate groups work cooperatively and productively with one another in formulating and implementing a Prototype Teacher Education Program.

By April 1970, Project participants had gradually surmounted most of the inherent interpersonal difficulties of the Project, and the qualitative stipulations of criterion one were substantially achieved once again. Thus by the end of April, most of the integrap Project participants were actively and cooperatively attempting to translate the theoretical model of the Prototype Program into behavioral practice.

Essentially, then, the conditions necessary for having accomplished the above are those stated in criterion one. It is clear that given the enormous number of inter and intrapersonal conflicts that had to be systematically resolved, it took many months of patient, deliberate and agonizing interaction to have achieved the interpersonal progress evidenced in June 1970. Paradoxically, to the inexperienced mind, it must surely appear that this amount of "progress" is unimpressive for the months of work devoted to the Prototype endeavor.

Criterion Two

1. Northeastern University's commitment to the success of the Prototype Program developed substantially beyond the "well-wishing," platitude stage. Given the fact that Northeastern had very little funds for new program development of any type, a substantial effort had been made to reorganize available institutional resources for achieving Project objectives. This can be seen in a variety of tangible ways.

a. The majority of full-time Instruction Department faculty in the College of Education had been devoting one-third of their professional time to the Prototype Program from September 1969 through June 1970. This indicated a strong interest by faculty in improving the quality of education in inner-city schools in Boston. Moreover, it clearly indicated that the Northeastern staff was concerned about re-examining its own current methods for preparing teachers to work in any educational setting.

The fact that an entire department of instruction was devoting

great time and energy to two inner-city school settings, working intimately with teachers in this environment, and in turn, reflecting critically upon this complex experience as a college faculty, assuredly had an important impact on the over-all professional behavior of this latter group. Anyone who realizes the infrequency of involved contact between college of education faculties and teachers working at lower grade-levels will appreciate the significance of the Northeastern staff effort.

The potential for educational innovation in the Prototype Program, both in terms of applied classroom practice and improving teacher education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, was great, presupposing that funding was secured for longer than the originally funded six month period which, in fact, through various economizing measures, was extended to June 1970. Thus, working on the assumption of Project continuation beyond June 1970, the logistics were developed at Northeastern for utilizing its available resources for promoting Project ends over a period of several years, and more generally for institutionalizing the concept of decentralized teacher preparation curricula both on the undergraduate and graduate levels. In this latter consideration, the major emphasis would be upon developing a variety of performance-oriented procedures enabling students majoring in any education speciality to acquire an actual functional expertise in the school environment of their choice. This would necessitate going well beyond the conventional student teacher concept. Additionally, prospective teachers would have extensive opportunity for applying and testing the efficacy of knowledge learned in the

broad variety of other liberal arts areas, as well as in revised education methods courses.

b. Thus at present, the reorganization of institutional resources has resulted in establishing the conditions where University courses can be modified in terms of emphasizing the application of didactic content and ascribing course credit free from the traditional contingencies of, for example, repeated mass meetings in single classrooms, regularly scheduled classes, time divisions by quarters or semesters, mass evaluation, the "one instructor, one class" concept, and so on. Important progress has been made in securing University faculty support for making these fundamental revisions. This has occurred largely from faculty involvement in the Prototype Program.

c. Support and encouragement for developing the many fruitful possibilities suggested in the Prototype Teacher Education model have been given by persons in principal positions of responsibility within the University structure. These individuals include the deans within the College of Education, deans and chairmen of other academic departments, and the president of Northeastern University. Thus, there has emerged, again principally from staff involvement in the Prototype Program, a firm assurance that feasible proposals for increasing the validity and efficacy of teacher-education and related liberal arts programs will be enthusiastically received and incorporated as on-going University curricula components. Much of the immediate thrust of this effort, at least insofar as the Prototype Project is concerned, if it had continued, would also have

been directed at generating utilitarian knowledge and procedures applicable to urban revitalization programs such as Boston Model Cities, and Community Committee for Educational Development (CCED), for example, not to mention, of course, the current efforts of the Boston Public School system and other universities in Boston.

Criterion Four

1. Criterion four pertains specifically to the degree of success achieved in attempting to translate the three propositions upon which the Prototype Program is based into practice. This criterion evaluates the final written specification of the cooperatively planned Prototype curriculum for preparing inner-city school teachers. Obviously, this statement is not presently available due to the premature termination of the Program. However, it can be reported that as a result of the impressive progress made in areas designated by criteria one through three, Project participants were by May 1970 beginning to generate a broad variety of provocative ideas that undoubtedly would have been operationally refined and validated, and hence incorporated into the final formalized curriculum.

In summary, it is no over statement to say that the Prototype Teacher Preparation Program is one of the most significant grass-root educational ventures cooperatively undertaken by institutional and non-institutional groups. If the Program remains unfunded, its achievements will be inconsequential, if evaluated on the basis of its ambitious objectives. Apart from the lasting personal relationships that have resulted from the endeavor, the Project, if permanently terminated, will have been

an extremely expensive way for getting a small number of people a few college credits and some stimulating field experience for several university professors. On the contrary, what is so desperately needed today are actual working models embodying feasible positive proposals for solving a broad variety of complex human problems. These would serve as the soundest basis for disseminating both information and encouragement.

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